

**Department of Education**  
25 Industrial Park Road  
Middletown, CT 06457  
Paul Flinter, *Chief*  
860-807-2050



**Department of Social Services**  
25 Sigourney Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5033  
Peter Palermino, *Manager*  
800-811-6141

## **SCHOOL READINESS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ALERT**

**ALERT Number:** SR /TA # 01-01

**Date:** February 26, 2001

☒ **Priority Schools**  
☐ **Severe Need Schools**

**TO:** School Readiness Council Liaisons

**FROM:** Paul Flinter, Chief  
Bureau of Early Childhood Education and Social Services

Peter Palermino, Manager  
Child Care Team

**SUBJECT:** **Kith & Kin (Informal/Relative) Child Care Providers**

The State Departments of Education and Social Services are issuing this TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ALERT to provide guidance to School Readiness Councils at priority school districts on the Quality Enhancement requirement for provision of services to informal child care providers.

### **WHAT IS REQUIRED?**

The Quality Enhancement grant for State Fiscal Year 2000-2001 requires that ten (10%) of each priority school community's allocation be targeted to serve informal/relative child care-kith and kin-providers.

### **RATIONALE**

Kith and kin care has existed since long before there were kindergartens, center-based care, family child care businesses, Head Start and school readiness programs, or any form of education for the masses. It is not only the oldest –but in some areas like Connecticut- it is the form of care most widely used by parents in all economic strata.

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty<sup>1</sup> -citing 1990 national estimates from the US Census Bureau- 48% of children were cared for by family members while their parents worked. An even greater proportion of families in which the mother worked part-time, evenings, or night shifts used relatives as the principal form of care: 59% of those working non-day shifts and 58% of those working part-time.

Poor families were most likely to use relative care: 60% of poor families compared to 46% of non-poor families. In fact, a preschool child in a poor family with a working mother was 50% more likely, than a similar child from a non-poor family, to have a relative as his or her primary caregiver.

In Connecticut, of the children receiving subsidized child care through the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), 72% are cared by relatives, friends and neighbors while the parents work<sup>2</sup>. A random sample of over 1,000 Connecticut families, conducted by the UCONN Center for Survey Research, revealed that, with the exception of children between 3 and 5 years of age, unregulated care represented the majority of care provided to all children in the survey, regardless of income level. For TFA<sup>3</sup> families where the parent did not provide care, unregulated care by relatives, friends and neighbors was the overwhelming choice for all age groups, especially among Latino

---

### **- SCHOOL READINESS -**

**A joint initiative of the Connecticut State Departments of Education and Social Services  
Working to provide quality early care and education programs to Connecticut's families**

---

**Department of Education**  
25 Industrial Park Road  
Middletown, CT 06457  
Paul Flinter, *Chief*  
860-807-2050



**Department of Social Services**  
25 Sigourney Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5033  
Peter Palermino, *Manager*  
800-811-6141

## **SCHOOL READINESS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ALERT**

families.

---

### **BEST PRACTICE**

- Programs recognize that informal providers are partners with staff in the education of children and that each brings strengths to that relationship.
- Programs seek to modify and adjust the services they already offer in order to include kith and kin child caregivers in extended service provision.
- Program staff respect individual differences in kith and kin providers including culture, language, and life styles.
- Programs seek to respond to kith and kin child care providers' needs by first finding out from them what they want and need, and how they like services to be made available to them.
- Programs recognize there are systems in place that identify and meet the needs of families by linkages to collaborating agencies, ostensibly at the neighborhood level, where services should be offered so that kith and kin providers feel comfortable accessing services.
- Programs seek and provide opportunities for kith and kin provider involvement at various levels.
- Programs recognize that kith and kin providers are caring for children and that a great deal of flexibility must be a trait of any and all services to kith and kin child caregivers. At a minimum, program flexibility means that child care must be available at the site where services are offered to facilitate kith and kin provider participation.

### **RESOURCES**

Attached to this Alert are the handouts distributed at the technical assistance workshop with Toni Porter (director of the Institute for A Child Care Continuum that coordinates the National Kith and Kin Child Care Initiative) that took place on July 27, 2000.

Should you have any questions or comments regarding these materials, please contact:

Department of Social Services  
Attention: Amparo Stella Garcia  
25 Sigourney Street, 10th Floor  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106  
860-424-5346

---

### **ENDNOTES:**

<sup>1</sup> Colins and Carson, 1998, Child Care by Kith and Kin - Supporting Family, Friends and Neighbors Caring for Children. New York: National Center for Children in Poverty, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Pine, Barbara A. Caring for Connecticut's Children. Perspectives on Informal, Subsidized Child Care. Hartford: Child health and Development Institute of Connecticut, December 1999, p.12.

---

### **- SCHOOL READINESS -**

**A joint initiative of the Connecticut State Departments of Education and Social Services  
Working to provide quality early care and education programs to Connecticut's families**

---

**Department of Education**  
25 Industrial Park Road  
Middletown, CT 06457  
Paul Flinter, *Chief*  
**860-807-2050**



**Department of Social Services**  
25 Sigourney Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5033  
Peter Palermino, *Manager*  
**800-811-6141**

**SCHOOL READINESS  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ALERT**

<sup>3</sup> Temporary Family Assistance.

---

**- SCHOOL READINESS -**

**A joint initiative of the Connecticut State Departments of Education and Social Services  
Working to provide quality early care and education programs to Connecticut's families**